

Message Text

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SUBJ: PUBLISHING IN THE PRC

1. SUMMARY. A BRITISH PUBLISHERS DELEGATION, HOSTED BY THE STATE PUBLICATIONS ADMINISTRATIVE BUREAU (SPAB), VISITED CHINA IN MARCH 1978. THE DELEGATION WAS TOLD THAT CHINA PUBLISHED ABOUT 3.7 BILLION VOLUMES OF BOOKS AND MAGAZINES A YEAR AND THAT OVER 10,000 TITLES WILL BE PUBLISHED THIS YEAR, A SEVERAL FOLD INCREASE OVER THE NUMBER PUBLISHED UNDER THE "GANG OF FOUR." THE SPAB IS RESPONSIBLE FOR PUBLISHING DOMESTIC BOOKS. THE CHINA NATIONAL PUBLICATIONS IMPORT CORPORATION IS RESPONSIBLE FOR ORDERING, PRINTING AND DISTRIBUTING FOREIGN BOOKS. THE CHINESE EXPRESSED INTEREST IN PURCHASING GRADUATE SCHOOL-LEVEL SCIENCE TEXTBOOKS, ENGLISH-LANGUAGE TEACHING BOOKS, AND A LIMITED NUMBER OF NOVELS OFFERING "SERIOUS SOCIAL CRITICISM." END SUMMARY.

2. A BRITISH PUBLISHERS DELEGATION VISITED PEKING, SHANGHAI AND CANTON IN MARCH. IT WAS HOSTED BY THE STATE PUBLICATIONS ADMINISTRATIVE BUREAU (SPAB), WHICH IS DIRECTLY SUBORDINATE TO THE STATE COUNCIL. ACCORDING TO THE BRITISH EMBASSY,
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THE DELEGATION'S AIMS WERE BOTH TO SELL BOOKS AND TO STUDY THE PUBLISHING INDUSTRY IN CHINA. ALTHOUGH THE DELEGATION MEMBERS LEARNED MUCH ABOUT CHINA'S DOMESTIC PUBLISHING INDUSTRY, THEY CONCLUDED THAT PROSPECTS FOR BOOKS SALES WILL BE LIMITED.

3. THE SPAB IS RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL INTERNAL PUBLISHING, BUT IS NOT INVOLVED IN DISTRIBUTION OF IMPORTED BOOKS. THE DELEGATION WAS

TOLD THAT 3.7 BILLION COPIES OF BOOKS AND MAGAZINES (NOT APPARENTLY INCLUDING PAMPHLETS) ARE PUBLISHED ANNUALLY IN CHINA AND THAT OVER 10,000 TITLES WILL BE PUBLISHED IN 1978, A SEVERAL FOLD INCREASE OVER THE FIGURE PERMITTED UNDER THE GANG OF FOUR. THE CHINA NATIONAL PUBLICATIONS IMPORT CORPORATION (CNPIC) IS RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPORTING, PRINTING AND DISTRIBUTING FOREIGN BOOKS. THE GUOZI XBDIAN HANDLES EXPORTS.

4. FOREIGN BOOK ACQUISITION WAS EXPLAINED AS FOLLOWS: CNPIC PERIODICALLY PREPARES A CATALOG OF FOREIGN BOOKS (PRIMARILY SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL TEXTBOOKS) THAT IS DISTRIBUTED THROUGHOUT CHINA THROUGH THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE BOOKSTORES (WAIWEN WHUDIAN) WHICH SERVES AS CNPIC BRANCHES. END-USERS -- SCHOOLS AND LIBRARIES -- MAY ORDER FROM THIS CATALOG. WHEN ORDERS ARE RECEIVED, THE CNPIC OBTAINS AND COPIES (I.E., PIRATES) THE REQUESTED BOOKS, USUALLY IN VAST QUANTITIES, AND DISTRIBUTES THEM. SOME LOCAL AUTHORITIES, E.G., CHUNGSHAN UNIVERSITY IN CANTON, HAVE FACILITIES FOR PRINTING MORE VOLUMES IF NEEDED. LOCAL BRANCHES OF WAIWEN SHUDIAN AND SOME END-USERS TOLD THE DELEGATION THAT THEY WOULD WELCOME RECEIVING FOREIGN CATALOGS DIRECTLY. THE GROUP WAS TOLD THAT SINCE THE DOWNFALL OF THE GANG OF FOUR REQUESTS TO IMPORT SCIENTIFIC BOOKS HAVE INVARIABLY BEEN APPROVED.

5. PEKING AND SHANGHAI ARE THE PRINCIPAL PUBLISHING CENTERS IN CHINA. ALTHOUGH SHANGHAI HAS A GREATER PRINTING CAPACITY, VIRTUALLY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ALL PUBLISHING AND PROCUREMENT DECISIONS ARE MADE IN PEKING. PEKING'S PRESSES INCLUDE THE COMMERCIAL PRESS, LITERATURE PRESS, EDUCATION PRESS, YOUTH PRESS, HALTH PRESS AND FOREIGN LANGUAGE PRESS. SHANGHAI WAS SAID TO HAVE ABOUT TEN PRESSES. TIENTSIN, SHANTUNG AND HUPEH WERE ALSO SAID TO HAVE LARGE PUBLISHING INDUSTRIES. THE SPAB HAS BRANCHES IN EACH PROVINCE AND EACH PROVINCE ALSO HAS A PEOPLE'S PUBLISHING HOUSE AND A SCIENCE PRUBLISHING HOUSE WHICH ARE SMALL AND GENERALLY PRODUCE BOOKS INTENDED TO "POPULARIZE" EXEMPLARY LOCAL EFFORTS IN FARMING AND INDUSTRY.

6. THE DELEGATION VISITED THE SHANGHAI HUMBER ONE PRINTING WORKS. THEY WERE IMPRESSED WITH THE FAIRLY HIGH LEVEL OF PRINTING TECHNOLOGY BUT WERE SURPRISED THAT BINDING WAS BEING DONE ENTIRELY BY HAND, CAUSING AN OBVIOUS BOTTLENECK.

7. IN SHANGHAI THE GROUP SPOKE WITH YANG HSIEN-YI, TRANSLATOR OF "THE DREAM OF THE RED CHAMBER," WHO CALLED MOST OF THE BOOKS PRINTED IN THE WEST "TRASH." IN THIS AND OTHER CONVERSATIONS THE PUBLISHERS WERE INFORMED THAT CHINA WISHES TO IMPORT ADVANCED (GRADUATE AND POST-DOCTORAL) LEVEL SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY BOOKS AND ENGLISH-LANGUAGE TEACHING MATERIALS. NO SECONDARY

EDUCATION LEVEL BOOKS ARE DESIRED AS THE SPAB WILL WRITE AND RPINT
THESE ITSELF. THE CHINESE ALLOWED THAT THEY WOULD BE INTERESTED
IN A LIMITED NUMBER OF WESTERN NOVELS CONTAINING SERIOUS SOCIAL
CRITICISM, A LA DICKENS.

8. THE PUBLISHERS STROVE TO INTEREST CHINESE OFFICIALS IN JOINING
THE INTERNATIONAL COPYRIGHT CONVENTION. THE CHINESE TOOK CAREFUL
NOTES BUT SEEMED INTERESTED ONLY IN LEARNING HOW THE INTERNATIONAL
COPYRIGHT SYSTEM WORKS.
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